



**Western South Dakota
Outdoor Report**
Wildlife Division Region 1
March 18, 2013



Bennett, S. Jackson, E. Shannon

Reporting Officer: WCO Tom Beck 3-13-13

Fishing Activity: The ice is very unstable this time of year. Some stock dams still have six inches of ice on it, but it is not good ice. Shoreline areas have much thinner ice, especially where weeds are present. The wind has started to open some of the bigger local lakes such as the Little White River Project. It is open on the south end and I imagine it won't take long for the north end to follow suit. Areas such as the trout ponds, which have spring fed moving water, are mostly open. As the ponds and lakes open, if you see any dead fish or other signs of a possible winterkill, please notify me. I have not had any reports yet of any possible winterkills, but if we did lose any of the lakes, we need to check to see if all the fish are dead or whether it was just a small portion of the lake that died. This will help us determine whether the lake needs to be restocked.

Hunting Report:



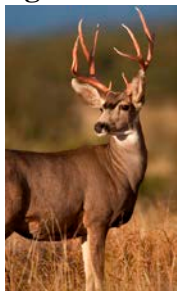
Waterfowl – So far no reports of snow or blue geese moving into the area. If you like to watch or photograph waterfowl, now is the time to come to the area. We have thousands of ducks and Canadian geese. There are also some Trumpeter Swans present. The birds appear to be heavily concentrated in the area waiting for the lakes to open further north. It won't be long until sandhill cranes and perhaps even a whooping crane or two to be coming north. If you see any white cranes in flocks of sandhill cranes, please let me know right away. Generally there will be small number of whoopers (one to six) mixed in flocks of sandhill cranes.



Small Game – I recently completed the winter rooster/hen survey to determine the winter sex ratio of pheasants in the area. While the sex ratio was very similar to last year's data, the difference was the number of birds seen. Last year some areas literally had thousands of wintering pheasants on them. This year the best areas had only a few hundred. The drought has really knocked the numbers down. The bright thing is that all is not lost. If we are lucky enough to receive moisture and the cover comes back, the birds can rebound very quickly and we may be back in business this fall.

Bennett, S. Jackson, E. Shannon (Cont.)

Big Game- The deer are still bunched on the wintering areas and most seem to be doing well although I've found a couple of dead deer recently which were being consumed by coyotes which indicates some issues. Like everything else, they have become stressed by the drought and the winter and some winter losses have occurred. The good news is that we still have good numbers of deer in some places so if spring ever gets here and things turn green, they should start dispersing into the spring/summer areas and they should start improving in body mass.



We often get questions from individuals wanting to look for shed antlers. My suggestion is to check with the agency where you want to look. For instance, if you are interested in looking for antlers on Tribal Grounds, check with the Tribal Game and Fish offices to see if it is allowed. As far as State Game Production Areas and State School and Public Lands, antler hunting is generally allowed. Please check on specific areas before going through. As far as the LaCreek National Wildlife Refuge, I believe they do not allow any antler hunting on their lands, but again I would suggest checking with their office for the final answer.

Land Report: Nothing new to report at this time.

District Report: I recently had another report of a dead eagle. This one wasn't killed by hitting a power line though. It had a bullet hole in it. If you see someone shooting at eagles, or have information on someone who might have shot at one, I would appreciate a call.

Butte, Harding County

WCO Bill Eastman - No report see 1-15 for last

Custer (South) see Pennington (West) for N. Custer

WCO Jacob Ehlert 3-13-13

Fishing- Ice has been getting thin in spots with the weather from the past week. Use extreme caution when venturing out onto the ice. Fishing has been slow.



Big Game – Mountain Lion hunters are still struggling to locate any lions. We need a good snow for success to improve.

Furbearers – Bobcat season is closed. Coyote hunters are having little success.

Land Report: Many winter travel management restrictions are in effect. Know where you are and make sure it's an open road! Forest Service Officers are aggressively enforcing travel restrictions. Please stay on designated roads and trails. Stop by the Custer U.S. Forest Service Office during the week to get a travel management map.

District Report: Report fish and wildlife violations. If you have any information please call TIPS at 1-888-Overbag.

Fall River

WCO D.J. Schroeder - report 2-25-13

Fishing Activity: I conditions are getting pretty un-predictable in the area. A lot of the shoreline is open at Angostura. This on-off 60 degree weather is making ice questionable. Not much for fishing activity to report on in the area.



Hunting Report: Waterfowl – A lot of waterfowl in the area for those that like to view ducks and geese. Have been seeing flocks headed north - - I guess spring is on its way. We don't usually see much for Snows or Blues this far west.

Small Game – Still some coyote hunting activity and varmit shooting going on around the area. We are going to need some moisture in the near future or it appears the pheasant and grouse habitat maybe in trouble again this spring. Will wait and see what the "late snow storms" in March and April do for us this year.



Big Game – Seeing a few guys trying mountain lion hunting in the area. Problem seems to be "access" when discussing lack of success on lion harvest in this area. Many hunters don't get out and pursue tracks as they know they will have to quit on them after a short distance in most cases. Getting reports of possible lion activity on a weekly basis though. We have begun the season setting process for many of the seasons. Sportsmen are reminded to visit with GFP staff and share their thoughts and concerns.

Land Report: Working on the annual management plans for the Game Production Areas. Continuing to work towards improving the habitat quality as well as the hunting opportunities for next fall.

District Report: Fishermen should remember to check and review the new regulations for 2013.

Hunters should also pay close attention to the off-road restrictions while hunting on the FS National Grasslands and the Black Hills Forest lands.

This is the time of year when most hunting seasons have closed for the year. Unfortunately, many people don't follow the laws and game violations occur as a result. Please take the time to record a license number and vehicle description when you witness a game violation. Don't hesitate to call the TIP's Hotline and report the violators. You will help us all preserve the sport!!

Haakon/ N. Jackson

WCO vacant;

Josh Brainard (see E. Pennington) and **Tom Beck** (see Bennett) **temporary until filled:**

Harding:

WCO vacant;

WCO: Mutschler (see Perkins) and Eastman (see Butte) temporary until filled

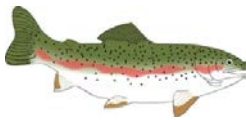
Jackson

Northern WCO: Josh Brainard See Pennington East

Southern WCO: Tom Beck See Bennet Co.

Lawrence (Northern) see Pennington (Western) for S. Lawrence

Reporting Officer: WCO Mike Apland 3-5-13



Fishing Activity: Ice on Mirror lakes not suitable for even foot traffic, Coxes Lake open, very limited fishing pressure, a few trout being caught. Iron Creek, good ice limited foot access onto lake, very little pressure.

Anglers are reminded to purchase their 2013 fishing license and pick up a new 2013 Fishing Handbook for any changes in rules and regulations.

Hunting Report:

Waterfowl – Spring Light Goose - very little snow geese activity in Lawrence County.

Small Game – Rabbit/Squirrel season closed Feb. 28th.



Big Game – Mountain lion season still going strong, new snow this week has got more hunters out trying to cut fresh tracks. 17 lions harvested to date in Lawrence County, 12 females.

Land Report: Be respectful of both public and private lands when you hunt.

District Report: Spearfish Spring Hunt/Safe Class scheduled for April 8th thru the 11th, any questions please call the office at 642-6057.

Meade

WCO Scot Hawks – no report see 12-14-12 for last report

Eastern Pennington

County: East Pennington/Haakon/N. Jackson

Reporting Officer: Josh Brainard 3-12-13



Fishing Activity: With recent warm weather ice conditions have started to deteriorate. Curlew Lake has open water with remaining ice not in good condition. New Underwood Dam has open water. Lake Waggoner and Wall Dam have open water also. Caution should be used on other area dams with fluctuating temperatures. Christmas tree structures are being added to Curlew Lake this month to add some fish structure to the lake.

Hunting Report: With the warm weather prairie dogs are starting to appear and I have been getting some questions about hunting on the grasslands. Remember that portions of the Buffalo Gap National Grasslands near Wall and Scenic are closed to Prairie dog hunting. You can stop at the Grassland Center in Wall and pick up a map of the closure areas. If you are coming out to hunt prairie dogs, remember that you need to pick up a 2013 hunting license. You can check online at www.gfp.sd.gov for specific information on license requirements.

Waterfowl – No Report

Small Game: No Report

Big Game: No Report

Land Report:

District Report: Be aware of fire danger. Conditions are still extremely dry out on the prairie. Be cautious of your driving habits and stay out of tall vegetation.

Pennington (Central)

WCO Joe Keeton, Jeff Edwards, Adam Geigle

See last report on 1-30-13

Pennington (Western)/ N.Custer/SW Lawrence

WCO Blair Waite Report –see last report on 1-23-13

Perkins and Ziebach

WCO Officer: Keith Mutschler: Report 2-26-13

Fishing Activity: Ice is becoming unstable in many lakes in Perkins County. Anglers are encouraged to use cautions when on the ice. Fishing has slowed in the last couple of weeks. A few walleyes and crappies are still being caught at Shadehill.

Hunting Report:

Waterfowl –There is still a lot of waterfowl around for those wishing to view and photograph them. Most species present are mallards and Canada geese.



Small Game –It was another successful season for upland game hunters in Perkins County. With many seasons that came to an end on January 6th, 2013 the birds will now have a chance to funnel back into areas and not have hunting pressure.

Big Game – All big game seasons with the exception to mountain lion season are closed.

Land Report: People traveling in vehicles on game production areas are reminded that they must stay on designated trails. If a trail becomes muddy or impassable it is not legal to make a new trail and continue on.

District Report:

Shannon

WCO D.J. Schroeder west (see Fall River); Tom Beck east (see Bennette)